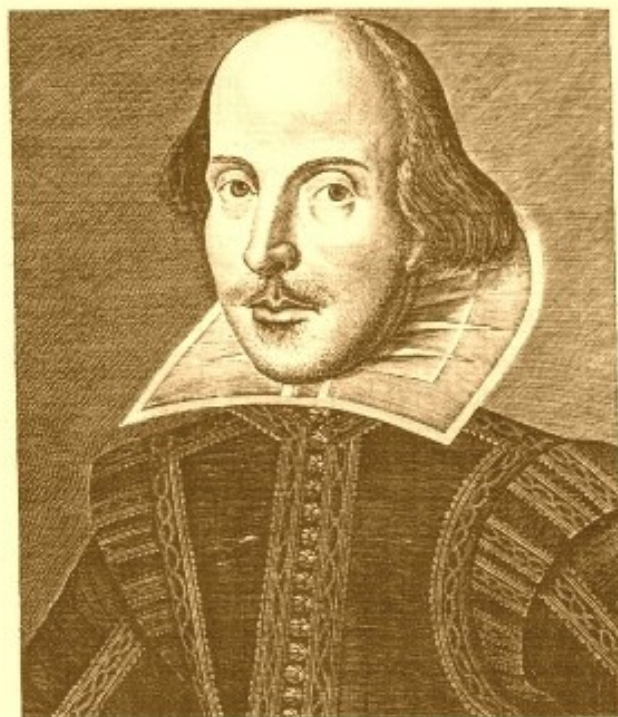


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to Modern English - for contemporary
readers and performers

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Shakespeare For White Trash: Pericles

Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney

October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:

“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!

These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.

Main Characters

Pericles — Prince of Tyre (Also referred to as King of Tyre. He’s young enough to be thought of as the Prince he was when his father was alive. Now, of course, he rules as King. Also, please note that this character is not related to the historical Pericles, who was an Athenian statesman in the 5th century B.C.)

Antiochus — King of Antioch

Daughter of Antiochus (No name given)

Helicanus and Escanes — Lords of Tyre

Simonides — King of Pentapolis

Thaisa — daughter of Simonides; later, wife of Pericles

Marina — daughter of Pericles and Thaisa

Lychorida — nurse to Marina

Cleon — Governor of Tharsus (Tarsus)

Dionyza — wife of Cleon

Leonine — servant to Dionyza

Lysimachus — Governor of Mytilene

Cerimon — lord of Ephesus; a doctor

Philemon — servant to Cerimon

Thaliard — lord of Antioch

Marshal

Madam (Referred to in the original as “Bawd” — i.e., brothel-keeper.)

Pander — husband of the Madam

Boult — servant to Pander

Diana — the goddess

Pirates

Fishermen

Lords

Knights

Sailors

Gentlemen of Ephesus

Servants in Ephesus

Gower — the “Chorus” (narrator)

Gist of the story: Pericles goes to Antioch to woo the King’s daughter, but he must answer a riddle or lose his life. He figures out that the King and his daughter are involved in an incestuous relationship, but he doesn’t want to make trouble by exposing them. He flees before Antiochus can have him killed. He returns to Tyre, but Antiochus sends Thaliard after him. Helicanus advises Pericles to go away until the trouble with Antiochus blows over. Pericles sails to Tharsus (Tarsus), a city beset by famine. He provides food, thereby earning the gratitude of Cleon and Dionyza. He then sails to Pentapolis, where he is shipwrecked. He makes his way to the court of King Simonides and competes against other knights in a tournament to win the hand of Thaisa in marriage. He wins and marries her. Sailing from Pentapolis, the ship encounters a storm. Thaisa apparently dies giving birth to their child, Marina, and Thaisa’s body is sealed in a coffin and thrown overboard. Pericles stops at Tharsus and entrusts the baby Marina to Cleon and Dionyza until she is fourteen. Meanwhile, Thaisa’s coffin washes ashore at Ephesus, where she is found still alive and is revived by Cerimon. She stays in Ephesus and becomes a priestess. Marina has grown into a beautiful and talented girl, which arouses terrible envy by Dionyza because her own daughter seems inferior by comparison. Dionyza orders Leonine to murder Marina. He is about to do so when pirates appear and kidnap Marina and take her to Mytilene, where they sell

her to a brothel. Cleon and Dionyza build a monument on Marina's fake tomb to deceive Pericles when he returns for her. Marina will not cooperate with the keepers of the brothel. Governor Lysimachus arrives as a customer, but after talking to Marina, he decides to help her leave. Pericles returns to Tharsus and is told Marina has died. Heartbroken, he leaves, and his ship stops at Mytilene for replenishment. There he is reunited with Marina. A vision of the goddess Diana tells him to go to Ephesus and tell his story to the priestess, who is Thaisa. She recognizes him and now all are happily reunited. Marina will marry Lysimachus. Gower, the narrator, tells us how Cleon and Dionyza were punished.

(*Pericles* has one of the most bizarre, complicated plots of any Shakespeare play. It is often compared to *The Winter's Tale*, which was written about the same time. Both plays are categorized by Shakespeare scholars as "late romances." (Another one is *The Tempest*.) Scholars also believe that Shakespeare was working from an existing play by some unknown author and that he basically rewrote it starting from Act 3. Although *Pericles* was well-liked in the 1600's, it fell into obscurity for a long time afterwards and has only had a revival in recent times. To me, it's a big Hollywood movie waiting to be made. You can't beat this story! Just get a couple of big names to fill the starring roles and give it to a really clever director like Julie Taymor. We'd need a more modern title, like *Voyage of Lust*. And, oh, yes, the "story consultant" should be Crad Kilodney, Duke of Sherbourne.)

Act 1, Prologue. *Before the palace at Antioch. Gower comes in as the Chorus (narrator). He is wearing weird or inappropriate clothes. (In fact, every time he appears, he will be dressed differently.)*

Gower: Hey, how's it going? My name is Gower. I'm a writer. I lived a long time ago, but I have good connections in the spirit world, so I get to come back once in a while to narrate stage plays. And I get to wear anything I want from the wardrobe department. We've got an incredible story for you. It's totally over the edge, believe me. This here is the ancient city of Antioch—which was the ancient capital of Syria, by the way. Now, the King of Antioch is a fellow named Antiochus. Lucky for him he was born in the right place—ha! Now, Antiochus is a widower, and he has a very beautiful daughter. We won't tell you her name. It doesn't really matter. And I think she prefers not to be named—for reasons I will explain to you. The King loves his daughter—in the wrong way, unfortunately. He loves her—incestuously. Now, this relationship has been going on for some time, and he doesn't want it to end. But there are men who want to marry her because she's so beautiful. Now, the King doesn't want her to get married, but he also doesn't want to give the impression that he doesn't want her to get married. Instead, he wants to give the impression that he's being very fussy—that he's holding out for the best possible man. So what he's done is to devise a sort of test that any suitor for his daughter has to pass. It's a riddle. The suitor has to answer it correctly or—he dies! So far, nobody's gotten it right. And all those who have tried, have died. The heads are supposed to be displayed on the wall behind me, but the Director was afraid that that would be politically incorrect, so he didn't put them up. In my day, however, there would've been no problem. Hell, you could see people's heads stuck up in plain sight in almost every town, and it was considered quite correct. Very instructive to the young people. I'm all for it.—Okay, so here in Antioch we have this incestuous relationship, and so far nobody has

solved the King's riddle.—But—like I said, this story is totally over the edge. Somebody has come to Antioch to seek the daughter's hand in marriage. And that somebody is going to figure out the riddle. And then—*(He looks offstage as if getting a prompt from the Director)* Okay, I can't say any more. You'll have to see for yourself. I'll see you later.

(Gower leaves.)

Act 1, Scene 1. *In the palace of Antioch. (Author's note: In the original, it says "before the palace," which puts the scene outdoors. But there is no reason for this action to be taking place outdoors.) Coming in are King Antiochus, Pericles, and Lords and Attendants.*

Antiochus: So, Prince Pericles, do you still want to marry my daughter?

Pericles: I do, indeed, my lord.

Antiochus: You understand that if you are unable to answer the riddle you'll be executed?

Pericles: Yes, my lord.

Antiochus: And you're willing to risk your life so you can marry my daughter?

Pericles: Yes, my lord. After what I've heard about her beauty. I want to take that chance.

Antiochus: She is the most beautiful woman in Antioch—as you'll see for yourself.

(Antiochus signals, and his Daughter comes in with a flourish of music.)

Pericles: I can see why men have been willing to risk their lives for her.

Antiochus: And so far they've all died.

Pericles: May the gods give me wisdom and let me succeed.

Antiochus: You have courage. Perhaps the gods will be kind to you.—And now for the riddle. *(He produces a scroll and drops it on the floor.)* Go ahead. It's all yours. Figure it out.

Daughter: Good luck to you, good Prince!

(Pericles picks up the scroll, opens it, and reads aloud.)

Pericles (Reading): "Father, son, and husband are three; and mother, wife, and child are three again. Yet they are one to the other. You would see but two if they were all before you. If you hope to live, explain how this can be."

(There is a long pause as Pericles looks at the riddle, the King, and the Daughter. He turns to the audience and speaks aside, very grimly.)

Pericles (To the audience): You know what this means? The two of them are—*(He makes a gesture representing intercourse.)* Now I don't want her any more. But I can't expose him here in his own court.

Antiochus: All right, Prince. What's your answer?

(A pause while Pericles considers what to say.)

Pericles: My lord, any man who understands this riddle will no longer want your daughter—for the same reason that you don't want him to understand it in the first place.

(The King is startled. The suggestion is embarrassment.)

Antiochus (Aside): He knows. He figured it out. *(To Pericles)* Is that your answer?

Pericles: It is all that I should speak. Anything more would do great harm.

(Another pause for effect.)

Antiochus: By the rules, I could have you executed right now.—However—as a kindness—I will reprieve you for forty days—to let you think it over.—I don't want anyone to say I wasn't totally fair with you. In the meantime, you may have the freedom of the palace.

(The King leaves, taking his Daughter by the hand, and followed by the Lords and Attendants.)

Pericles: The freedom of the palace? And after forty days, what then?—He's not going to let me live forty days. He knows that I know his secret. He's not going to take any chances. If he's so foul that he would fuck his own daughter, he won't hesitate to have me killed. He'll make it look like an accident.—Well, I'm not hanging around here, that's for sure. I'm getting the hell out of here.

(Pericles leaves. Shortly thereafter, Antiochus returns.)

Antiochus: What the hell was I thinking? Forty days to think it over? And then what? Have him expose me? He could do that at any moment. *(Ponders. Then calls)* Thaliard!

(Thaliard comes in.)

Thaliard: Your Majesty!

Antiochus: Thaliard, you're my chamberlain. *[Author's note: Manager of the household.]* I know I can trust you.

Thaliard: Absolutely, my lord.

Antiochus: I need you to do something for me, and it has to be kept secret.

Thaliard: Anything, my lord.

Antiochus: I've given Prince Pericles a forty-day stay of execution. It was a mistake. We have to get rid of him now. Don't ask me to explain why. He's a threat to the kingdom, that's all. You help me with this and there's a big reward in it for you.

Thaliard: You can count on me, my lord.

Antiochus: You're in charge of all the food and wine. I want you to poison him. I'll provide you with the poison. You figure out the best way to slip it to him. I want it done tonight. Can you do that?

Thaliard: Yes, my lord.

(A Messenger rushes in.)

Messenger: My lord, the visitor Pericles is gone. He has fled.

Antiochus: Damn! *(He takes Thaliard aside and speaks confidentially.)* Go after him. Kill him.—And don't fail me—*(More sinister tone)* or I will be very unhappy with you.

Thaliard: Don't worry, my lord. I'll get him. You can count on me.

Antiochus: Okay. Go.

(Thaliard leaves, and Antiochus leaves separately with the Messenger.)

Act 1, Scene 2. *Tyre. A room in the palace. Pericles comes in, looking very grim.*

Pericles: I don't feel safe even here in Tyre. That bastard will come after me. He's going to worry about me. He might even send an army to destroy the whole city—and we're no match for him.

(Helicanus comes in with two other Lords.)

1st Lord: You're looking well, my lord! We're so glad to have you home!

2nd Lord: We're all happy, happy, happy! And you do look exceptionally well, sir!

1st Lord: As I always say, a happy prince makes a happy city.—Isn't that right?

2nd Lord: I couldn't agree more.

Helicanus: Why don't you guys shut up.

Lords: Oh!—Oh!

Helicanus: You guys are such suck-ups.

(Pericles appears offended for a moment. Then he signals the two Lords to leave.)

Pericles: You guys can go.

(The two Lords leave.)

Helicanus: Sorry, my lord. It's just that I don't like flatterers.

Pericles: They were only trying to cheer me up.

Helicanus: What good is that, my lord?

Pericles: You're being contrary, Helicanus.

Helicanus: No, sir, I'm just being honest. If there's a problem—and there is—I want to help you deal with it. Otherwise, what good am I as an advisor?

(Pericles considers for a moment.)

Pericles: You're a good man. I appreciate your honesty. So what do you think I should do?

Helicanus: Be patient. Let a little time go by.

Pericles: That's easy for you to say. My head's on the chopping block and Antiochus is holding the axe. He doesn't mind killing people. And he'll do whatever he has to do to make sure I don't expose his dirty little secret. Of course, I never had any intention of exposing him. But if he sends an army, the whole city's in trouble.

Helicanus: Go away for a while. Get out of Tyre. This whole thing may blow over. He may calm down.

Pericles: Better he should have a heart attack and die.

Helicanus: Either way it'll work itself out. Take a few ships and go away for a few months.

Pericles: Who'll run the city?

Helicanus: I will. You can count on me. Tyre will be safe in my hands.

Pericles: All right. You're the best man for the job.—I'll go to Tharsus. You keep me informed. Send me letters.

Helicanus: I will.

Pericles: Good.

(Pericles links arms with Helicanus and they leave.)

Act 1, Scene 3. *Before the palace at Tyre. Thaliard comes in but remains to one side.*

Thaliard: So this is Tyre. I have to find Pericles and kill him. If I succeed, I'll be hanged here. And if I fail, I'll be hanged in Antioch.—Tsk!—This is what I get for being the King's right-hand man.

(Coming in from the other side are Helicanus, Escanes, and other Lords. They are in conversation and don't notice Thaliard, who makes himself inconspicuous.)

Helicanus: My lords, all I can tell you is that the Prince decided to leave and he left me in charge.

Thaliard (Aside): What? He's gone?

1st Lord: But can't you tell us why?

Helicanus: Like I said, he had a little bit of diplomatic trouble in Antioch. Exactly what, I don't know. But he thought he had offended the King in some way, and he felt bad about it and, em, he just wanted to go away for a while and think it over.

2nd Lord: So he's taken a boat somewhere?

Helicanus: Yes, but I don't know where.

Thaliard (Aside): That's convenient. I'll just tell the King that Pericles was, em—lost at sea. Yeah. *(He steps forward and addresses the Lords.)* Hello! Greetings! Peace to you!

Helicanus: Hello, sir. Do we know you?

Thaliard: I'm Thaliard—chamberlain to King Antiochus.

Helicanus: Ah.—Yes. What brings you here?

Thaliard: I was sent with a message for Prince Pericles—but it appears that he's—gone away? Is that the case?

Helicanus: Em, yes. He's taken a trip.

Thaliard: Oh. Too bad. My message was for his ears only. I'll have to report to my King that I was unable to deliver it.

Helicanus: That's all right. Since you've come all this way, you might as well stay for a while and enjoy the hospitality of the palace.

Thaliard: Thank you—my lord—

Helicanus: Helicanus. Temporary governor.

Thaliard: My lord Helicanus. Your friend, sir. Thank you.

(They all leave.)

Act 1, Scene 4. *The Governor's house in Tharsus. Cleon, the Governor, comes with his wife, Dionyza. They look very worried.*

Cleon: What shall we do, Dionyza? The city is starving. I can't believe what's happening. Tharsus used to be so happy and prosperous. Now—

Dionyza: I never thought such a famine could happen here.

Cleon: Mothers can't even nurse their babies. Men are killing themselves so their families can eat what little food they have.—There have even been instances of—cannibalism!

Dionyza: I never knew hunger before. Now I do.

Cleon: I've lost so much weight.—How many more days can we hold out?

(A Lord comes in as messenger.)

Lord: My lord Governor, there are ships on our shore. One has already landed.

Cleon: Are we being invaded? That's the last thing we need.

Lord: I don't think so, sir. They're flying white flags. I think they come in peace.

Cleon: I hope it's not a trick. See who's in charge and bring him to me.

Lord: Yes, my lord.

(The Lord leaves.)

Cleon: If they're enemies, we're at their mercy.

Dionyza: They'll be friendly. I'm sure they'll be.

(After a few moments, Pericles comes in with Attendants. [Shakespeare doesn't say whose, but I would assume they are Tharsian.])

Pericles: My lord Cleon! Pericles, Prince of Tyre.

Cleon: Prince Pericles.—Why are you here?

Pericles: Don't be alarmed, sir. We come in peace. I understand you have a famine.

Cleon: Yes.

Pericles: I'm loaded with food. You can have it.

Cleon: Food! Thank the gods!

Dionyza: We're saved!

(Cleon embraces Pericles.)

Pericles: My lord, I need a safe place to stay for a while.

Cleon: Stay here. As long as you like.

Pericles: Thank you. I will.

Cleon: Oh, Dionyza, this is a miracle!—Oh!—We must distribute the food. I must get all my lords.—Dionyza, you help the visitors get settled in.

Dionyza: Yes. At once.

Cleon: Come. We have to get busy.

(They all go out.)

Act 2, Chorus. *Gower comes out, dressed differently and eating an apple.*

Gower: Hi!—Gower.—Excuse me.—This is the first thing I've had to eat since I came back to a physical body.—Mmm! Good!—Okay. Let's move the story along. Now—Helicanus has sent a message to Pericles in Tharsus warning him that Antiochus sent an assassin to Tyre to murder him. That was Thaliard, as you recall. Helicanus is no fool. He realized why Thaliard was really there. He let him go back to Antioch, but then he worried that Antiochus might have spies out searching and might possibly learn that Pericles was in Tharsus. So the latest message from Helicanus warns Pericles not to stay in Tharsus too long. So Pericles, taking this advice, has sailed away, taking only his flagship. And guess what's happened. He's been shipwrecked. Why? Because this is Shakespeare, and people are always getting shipwrecked. But, of course, Pericles is alive, even if everyone else on board has died and his friends back home think he's dead. How do I know? Hey, if the guy was dead, the play would be over,

right? And we've got four more acts to show you, okay? I told you this a hell of a story, didn't I? Hell, yes. Wait till you see what happens when—*(He gets a signal from offstage)*—Yeah, right.—Okay, just watch and see for yourselves.—Mmm! Good apple. It's a Mac-in-Tyre. Get it? Mac-in-Tyre?—Okay, whatever. I'll see you later.

(Gower leaves.)

Act 2, Scene 1. *The beach at Pentapolis. Pericles staggers in wet and exhausted.*

Pericles: I made it! *(Looks back)* My ship.—They're all gone.—I'm the only one who survived. *(Looks around)* Where am I?

(He sees someone coming and hides. Then three Fishermen come in.)

1st Fish.: What a storm that was! You know, sometimes I wonder how the fish can live in the sea when it storms like that.

2nd Fish.: It don't make no difference to them. They're under the water. It don't matter what's happening on the surface.

3rd Fish.: It only matters to people on ships. Like those poor devils that got drowned out there.

2nd Fish.: That was terrible. I feel so sorry for them.

1st Fish.: It would be a miracle if anyone survived.

2nd Fish.: I wonder if we can still find our nets. They might have been destroyed.

(Pericles steps forward.)

Pericles: Fishermen, peace to you!

2nd Fish.: Good God, man! Where did you come from?

Pericles (Pointing to the sea): That was my ship that went down. I think I'm the only survivor.

1st Fish.: Well, you are the lucky one!

2nd Fish.: I'll say!

Pericles.: Where am I?

1st Fish.: Near Pentapolis.

Pericles (Shivering): I'm cold.

3rd Fish.: Here. Take this.

(He gives Pericles something to wear.)

Pericles: Thank you.

1st Fish.: You'd better come home with us. We'll take care of you.

Pericles: Thank you. I appreciate it.

2nd Fish.: We just have to check our nets. Just wait.

(The 2nd and 3rd Fishermen go out.)

Pericles: Who is your king?

1st Fish.: The good King Simonides.

Pericles: You must like him.

1st Fish.: We do. He's a good guy. This is a good place.

Pericles: How far is his court from here?

1st Fish.: Half a day's journey. Why? Do you want to go there?

Pericles: Yes.

1st Fish.: It'll be crowded. There are lots of knights from all over come for the tournament.

Pericles: Tournament?

1st Fish.: Yes. You know. The manly skills. That sort of thing. Are you into that?

Pericles: Mm—yes, actually. What's the tournament for? Just for fun?

1st Fish.: No. It's his daughter's birthday. Her name is Thaisa. She's very beautiful. All the knights want to marry her. So the tournament is a way for the King to size them up.

Pericles: I'd love to compete, but I lost all my gear.

(The other two Fishermen return, dragging a net full of armour.)

2nd Fish.: Look what we found in the net!

3rd Fish.: No fish. Just a lot of armour. It's pretty dirty. We'd have to clean it up.

Pericles: That's my gear!

2nd Fish.: Ah—well—we caught it, sir. It's ours by the rules of the trade.

Pericles: Please! Let me have it. I want to compete in that tournament. If I win, I'll give you all a reward. I'll make it worth your while.

3rd Fish.: Think you're good enough? There'll be a lot of competition.

Pericles: I can win.—Of course, I'd need a horse.

3rd Fish.: I'm afraid we don't have a horse.

(Pericles reaches into his pocket and pulls out a jewel.)

Pericles: I have this jewel. That's all I've got. But it should be enough to buy a horse, don't you think?

1st Fish.: You are the lucky one, sir. Yeah, I think we can find you a horse.

2nd Fish.: You'll need some clothes. You want to look respectable.

3rd Fish.: We'll fix him up with something. *(To Pericles)* Nothing fancy. Just functional.

Pericles: So we've got a deal, then?

3rd Fish.: Yes, yes. You come along with us, and we'll feed you and clean you up. And then we'll escort you to the city ourselves.

Pericles: That's great! Thanks!

(They all leave.)

Act 2, Scene 2. *Pentapolis. An open space with a pavilion at rear stage. Simonides comes in with Thaisa, Lords, and Attendants.*

Simonides: Are the knights ready to present themselves?

1st Lord: They are, my lord.

Simonides: Then let's have a look at them. One at a time.

1st Lord: Yes, my lord.

(The Lord goes out.)

Simonides (To Thaisa): You see how popular you are? All these brave knights are here to impress you. And I can't blame them.

Thaisa (Laughing): Oh, father!

Simonides: Now let's see how well you've learned your languages. When the knights come in, you read the mottos on their shields.

Thaisa: Okay. I think I can do that.

(Simonides and Thaisa sit in the pavilion, followed by other Lords. The Lord who left returns and sits down, too. Then a flourish of music announces each Knight, who is accompanied by his Page. The Page holds up the Knight's shield. The First Knight comes in.)

Simonides: Who is this fellow?

Thaisa: He's from Sparta. And his motto is "Lux tua vita mihi."—"Thy light is life to me."

Simonides: Very good.

(The First Knight goes out with applause from the audience. Then the Second Knight comes in.)

Simonides: And who is this?

Thaisa: A prince of Macedonia. His motto is “Piu per dolcezza che per forza.”—“More by gentleness than by force.”

Simonides: Very good.

(The Second Knight goes out, and the Third Knight comes in.)

Simonides: And where is he from?

Thaisa: Antioch. And his motto is “Me pompae provexit apex.”—“The crown of the triumph has led me on.”

Simonides: Excellent.

(The Third Knight goes out, and the Fourth Knight comes in.)

Thaisa: This one says, “Qui me alit me extinguit.”—“Who feeds me puts me out.” That’s a strange motto.

Simonides: It’s a paradox. The same beauty that inspires can also kill.

Thaisa: I’m afraid I don’t understand.

Simonides: You’re too young. It’ll make more sense when you’re older.

(The Fourth Knight goes out, and the Fifth Knight comes in.)

Thaisa: This one says, “Sic spectanda fides.”—“Thus is faithfulness to be tried.”

Simonides: I like that.

(The Fifth Knight goes out, and Pericles comes in as the sixth knight, but without a page.)

Simonides: He doesn’t have a page. But he seems very noble. Where is he from?

Thaisa: I can’t tell. But his motto is “In hac spe vivo.”—“In this hope I live.”

Simonides: Hope. Yes, he must have plenty of that.

(Pericles goes out.)

1st Lord: His armour’s rusty. I guess he doesn’t use it much.

2nd Lord: And his clothes are a bit on the shabby side, I’d say.

3rd Lord: I don’t think he’ll do very well.

Simonides: Don’t be fooled by appearances. It’s what’s inside a man that matters, not what’s on the outside.—Come, everyone. Let’s go watch the action.

(Simonides leads them all out.)

Act 2, Scene 3. *A banquet hall in the palace of Pentapolis. Simonides comes in with Thaisa, the Marshal, Lords, Ladies, the six Knights, and Attendants. They are conversing happily as they come in, except Pericles, who is quiet. Simonides claps his hands for silence.*

Simonides: Knights, you have performed brilliantly, and now you shall be feasted as you deserve.—
Thaisa, you may have the honour of announcing the winner of the tournament.

Thaisa: The winner is—the mysterious stranger!—Sir, I crown you with this wreath of victory!

(She puts a wreath on Pericles's head as all applaud.)

Pericles: I was just lucky.

Simonides: Lady Luck always kisses the one who deserves her the most.—Sit down, everyone. Eat. Drink. Have a good time.

Marshal (To Pericles): You'll sit beside the King, sir.

Pericles: Oh—I'm hardly worthy.

Simonides: Yes, yes. You sit down right here.

(Pericles sits.)

1st Knight: He won fair and square, didn't he?

Other Knights: Yes!

Pericles: You gentlemen are too kind.

Thaisa (Aside to Simonides): He's handsome, isn't he?

Simonides: You think so? *(He shrugs.)*

Pericles (Aside, looking a bit sad): The King reminds me of my own father. Now there was a man. Better than I'll ever be.

Simonides: I want to see everyone happy! Drink up, gentlemen!

Knights: We're happy, sir!

Simonides (Aside to Thaisa): This fellow doesn't look happy. Tell him to drink.

Thaisa: I'm too shy.

(The King raises a cup.)

Simonides (Aside to Thaisa): Just do it. And tell him we want to know who he is and where he comes from.

Thaisa (To Pericles): My good knight, the King drinks to you.

Pericles: I thank him.

Thaisa: And he wants to know who you are and where you come from.

Pericles: I come from Tyre, and my name is Pericles. I was on—shall we say—an adventure. And I was shipwrecked on your shore.

Simonides: Shipwrecked!—No wonder you seem sad.—Let's have some music! Let's all be happy! *(Lively music is heard.)* You knights have a good time and sleep in as late as you want.—And you, Sir Pericles, will have the best guest room in the palace.

Pericles: I'm grateful, sir.

(The scene ends as couples begin to dance.)

Act 2, Scene 4. *Tyre. Helicanus and Escanes come in. A conversation is in progress.*

Escanes: Incest? Antiochus and his daughter were committing incest?

Helicanus: Yes. And you know what happened to them?

Escanes: No. What?

Helicanus: They were out riding in a chariot and this great fire came down from the sky and burned them up.

Escanes: No! Really?

Helicanus: Yes.

Escanes: Wow! Talk about divine punishment!

Helicanus: That's exactly how the people in Antioch took it—divine punishment. They wouldn't even bury them.

(Three Lords come in, talking to each other.)

1st Lord: Do you want to tell him, or should I?

2nd Lord: No, you go ahead.

3rd Lord: You can speak for all of us.

1st Lord: Okay.—My lord Helicanus.

Helicanus: Yes, lords. What can I do for you?

1st Lord: Well, sir, we've been talking it over, and we're very concerned about the Prince. Nobody knows where he is or whether he's dead or alive. We want to go out and look for him.

2nd Lord: If it turns out he's dead, we'd like you to be the new Prince.

3rd Lord: We all have the greatest confidence and respect for you, sir.

Helicanus: Thank you. That's very kind. But I think we should wait for him a while longer.

1st Lord: But how long, sir?

Helicanus: Let's give him another twelve months. If he's not back by then, we'll assume something's happened to him and I'll be your new Prince. But if you want to go out and look for him, that's okay with me.

(The Lords exchange nods of agreement.)

1st Lord: Yes, I think we'll do that, sir.

Helicanus: The kingdom will be safe in any event.

1st Lord: Thank you, my lord.

(Helicanus shakes hands with them, and the Lords leave.)

Act 2, Scene 5. *Pentapolis. King Simonides comes in slowly, reading a letter. Three Knights come in from the other side.*

Knights: Good morning, my lord.

Simonides: Good morning, gentlemen. I have a letter from my daughter. She says she's decided not to get married for another year, although she won't say why.

1st Knight: Ah. *(He exchanges looks with the other Knights.)* That is awkward. Could we possibly speak to her, my lord?

Simonides: I'm afraid not. She prefers not to see any suitors for a year.

2nd Knight: Then I guess there's no point in hanging around. *(Looking at the other Knights)* Is there? *(They shake their heads.)*

Simonides: I'm sorry, gentlemen.

1st Knight: Then we will take our leave of you, sir. And we thank you for your very kind hospitality.

2nd Knight: And we wish your daughter happiness.

3rd Knight: And you, too, sir.

Simonides: Thank you, gentlemen. It's been a pleasure to have you here. Good luck to all of you.

Knights: Thank you, sir.

(They shake hands and the Knights leave.)

Simonides: Good. They're out of the way. *(To the audience)* My daughter wants to marry Pericles. She's quite insistent. That's all right with me. I like the fellow. But I won't tell him yet. I just want to put him to a little test.

(Pericles comes in.)

Pericles: Good morning, my lord.

Simonides: Ah, there you are, Pericles. I want to ask you something.

Pericles: Yes, my lord?

Simonides: What do you think of my daughter?

Pericles: I think she's wonderful.

(Simonides assumes a serious expression, pretending to be displeased.)

Simonides: Frankly, I think you've bewitched her.

Pericles: Bewitched her? No, my lord. Certainly not.

Simonides: Read this.

(He hands Pericles the letter. Pericles looks surprised as he reads it.)

Simonides: How could a virgin be so adamant about marrying a man she hardly knows—unless he did something improper to manipulate her mind?

Pericles: I've done nothing, sir. I swear it.

Simonides: Liar! Traitor! Is this how you repay my hospitality?

Pericles (Angrily): No man has ever called me a liar or a traitor! My conduct here has been as noble as my thoughts! I came here to compete honourably, not to manipulate your daughter in any way!

Simonides (Aside to the audience): He's got courage. I like that. *(To Pericles)* Well, we'll just see what she has to say about it.

(Thaisa comes in.)

Pericles: Madam! Your father thinks I've done something—that I've bewitched you—to make you want to marry me. Tell him it isn't so.

Thaisa (Laughing): It isn't so. But even if it were, who cares? I'm happy.

Simonides (Holding up the letter): So you're quite serious about this?

Thaisa: Oh, yes.

(Simonides winks aside to the audience.)

Simonides (Pretending to be stern): Now then, girl, you'll not do anything without my consent. You hardly know this man. *(Aside to the audience)* Although for all I know, he could be a prince or something. *(To Pericles, pretending to be stern)* And you, sir, must be governed by my wishes, not my daughter's—otherwise—

Pericles: Otherwise what, sir?

Simonides: Otherwise—*(Smiling)* I shall have to marry the two of you!

(Simonides takes both their hands and pulls them beside him. Thaisa laughs.)

Simonides: Well? Are you both happy now?

Thaisa: Yes! *(To Pericles)* That is, if you think you can love me, sir.

Pericles: I will love you as I love life itself.

Simonides: Excellent! We've made a match. Now let's get this marriage done with before the spell wears off!

(Thaisa laughs. They all leave.)

Act 3, Prologue. *Gower comes in wearing a hockey jersey and holding a hockey stick.*

Gower: This is the craziest damned game I've ever seen. We never had this in my day. You have two teams with six guys on each side, and they have to run on this big sheet of ice. And they wear these shoes with steel blades underneath, and they skate on the edges of the blades. I swear, I don't know how anyone can do that. And everybody's got a stick like this, and they try to hit this disc sort of thing—they call it a puck—and they try to whack it into a net. It's a bit like field hockey, except they're constantly banging into each other. And every now and then they get into a fight and try to beat each other up—except they're wearing so much padding they can't really do much, and it's really awkward because they're on those skates. It looks really stupid, but the crowd loves it. I swear, I've never seen anything like it. It's very un-English, as far as I'm concerned. It's strictly for the wackos and misfits in the colonies. Goodbye, London—hello, Cannibal Island.—Anyway, back to the story. Pericles and Thaisa are married, and she's pregnant. Helicanus has finally found out where Pericles is, and he has sent him a letter telling him Antiochus is dead and he should return to Tyre if he still wants to be Prince.—Or King. Same difference.—So Pericles and Thaisa and her nurse Lychorida have left Pentapolis and are on a ship headed for Tyre. Now, since this is Shakespeare, one of two things has to happen. Either—the ship will be attacked by pirates—or—the ship will run into a storm. Who wants to guess pirates? Raise your hands.—And who wants to guess storm? Raise you hands.—Well, in fact, it's going to be a storm. And believe me, you don't want to be on this ship.

(Gower goes out.)

Act 3, Scene 1. *On board the ship during a storm. Pericles comes in.*

Pericles: You gods stop this storm now! Right now! My wife is going to have a baby!

(Lychorida comes in holding the baby.)

Pericles: Lychorida!

Lychorida: My lord—you have a daughter.

(She gives the baby to Pericles.)

Pericles: What about Thaisa? How is she?

Lychorida: My lord—she is dead.

Pericles (Looking up to heaven): You gods!—Have you no pity?

Lychorida: I'm sorry, my lord.—You must think of the baby. That's all you can do.

Pericles (To the baby): What a way to come into the world!

(Two Sailors come in.)

1st Sailor: Are you all right, sir?

2nd Sailor: This is a terrible storm.

Pericles: I'm not afraid—not for myself. I'm only afraid for her *(Indicating the baby)*.

2nd Sailor: We're sorry about your wife, sir.—But—the storm—you see, it's bad luck to keep—

1st Sailor: The body. It's bad luck to keep the body on board. The storm won't stop until—madam's body is thrown overboard.

Pericles: That's superstition.

1st Sailor: No, sir. This is the rule for all sailors. The whole crew knows it's bad luck. There'll be a panic unless your wife's body is put over. We have a coffin all prepared.

(Pericles gives the baby back to Lychorida.)

Pericles: Take the baby below. Stay close to her every moment.

Lychorida: She'll be closer than my shadow, sir.

(Lychorida goes out with the baby.)

Pericles: I must say goodbye to my queen. And I want to write a letter to put in her coffin for whoever finds it.—Where are we?

2nd Sailor: Near Ephesus.

[Author's note. There's a glitch in the original play, which is not at all unusual for Shakespeare. In the original, the sailor says they're near Tharsus. But Thaisa's coffin washes ashore at Ephesus. Since they're about to dump the body, they must be near Ephesus, which is confirmed in Act 5, Scene 3. After dumping the body, they go on to Tharsus so Pericles can leave the baby in safe hands rather than put her at risk in the storm. This is awkward, however, because the two cities are very far apart, so the ship must still travel a very great distance. Shakespeare is sometimes careless about geography. Neither edition that I worked from — Signet or Cambridge — makes any comment about this problem of Ephesus and Tharsus.]

Pericles: All right. We'll do what we have to do here. Then I want to go to Tharsus to leave the baby with Cleon. I don't want to put her at risk all the way to Tyre.

Sailors: Yes, sir.

(Pause.)

Pericles: I want to give my queen a last kiss.

(Pericles leaves, followed by the Sailors.)

Act 3, Scene 2. *Ephesus. The home of Cerimon, a doctor. Cerimon is already present when the curtain goes up. He looks tired. His sleeves are rolled up, suggesting he has been working.*

Cerimon (Calling): Philemon!

(Philemon comes in.)

Philemon: Yes, my lord?

Cerimon: Have the patients been taken care of?

Philemon: They're resting comfortably, sir.

Cerimon: Make sure they're fed and kept warm.

Philemon: They will be, sir. I'll be with them every moment.

Cerimon: Good.

(Philemon goes out.)

Cerimon: What a night!—What a storm!

(Two Gentlemen come in.)

1st Gent.: My lord Cerimon, have you been up all night?

Cerimon: Had to. I had a dozen men who almost drowned in the storm.

2nd Gent.: We were afraid your house would get blown down.

Cerimon: I think it almost did.

1st Gent.: You're a hero, sir. You're the best doctor in Ephesus.

Cerimon: I get a certain pleasure out of cheating death.

2nd Gent.: You've got the knack for it. That's for sure.

(Two or three Servants come in, dragging or carrying a chest, which is the coffin containing Thaisa.)

1st Serv.: My lord! This chest got washed ashore in the storm!

Cerimon: Oh! Let's have a look.

2nd Serv.: Looks sort of like a coffin to me, sir.

(Cerimon tests its weight.)

Cerimon: It's heavy, whatever it is. *(He examines it more closely.)* Look at this. See how it's sealed with caulking? It must have floated despite its weight.

1st Serv.: A big wave picked it up and left it on the beach.

Cerimon: Open it.

(The Servants pry it open with bars.)

1st Serv.: It's a body!

2nd Serv. (To the 1st Servant): What did I tell you?

(Cerimon examines the inside of the coffin.)

Cerimon: There's a letter.

(He takes the letter and reads it.)

Cerimon: Pericles—this is his wife—daughter of a king—died in childbirth—had to toss her overboard in the storm—Tsk! The poor man! What a tragedy!

1st Gent.: She was a beautiful lady. And so young.

(Cerimon examines the body.)

Cerimon: Hold on!—Wait a minute!—I think she's alive!

1st Gent.: Alive!

2nd Gent.: How can that be?

Cerimon: This is extraordinary! *(To the Servants)* Get me my box of medicines.

(A Servant rushes out.)

Cerimon: This is something very rare, but it can happen. The body can go into a coma for several hours and be mistaken for dead. It can still be revived—assuming the doctor knows what he's dealing with.—Yes.—She's breathing—just barely.

(The Servant returns with the box of medicines. Cerimon takes a phial and administers the medicine, either on the lips or in the nose.)

1st Gent.: She's moving!

Cerimon: Help her up.

(Cerimon and the two Gentlemen help Thaisa sit up in the coffin.)

Thaisa (Confused): Where am I?—Where is my lord?

Cerimon: You're all right, madam. You're safe. *(To the Gentlemen)* Let's get her into a bed.

(Cerimon and the two Gentlemen lift her out of the coffin and carry her out.)

Act 2, Scene 3. *Tharsus. Curtain up finds Pericles, Cleon, Dionyza, and Lychorida, who holds the baby Marina in her arms.*

Pericles: My lord Cleon, you've been very gracious to put up with me for so long.

Cleon: Nonsense. You can stay as long as you like.

Pericles: I'm needed back at Tyre. They're anxious to have me home. Now, regarding the baby, I've been considering that I really shouldn't take her back to Tyre. With her mother gone, I can't give her the attention she needs. I'd rather leave her in your care—with her nurse, of course.

Cleon: No problem.

Dionyza: We'll take good care of her, don't you worry. We'll treat her like our own daughter.

Pericles: Can you keep her until she's fourteen? Give her a proper education?

Cleon: Absolutely. We'll raise her to be a queen someday. We'll give her the best.

Dionyza: And the people will love her. They haven't forgotten how you helped us during the famine.

Pericles: I may not see her again until she's married. Until then I won't cut my hair or my beard.

Cleon: We'll arrange a fine marriage for her, don't worry. Come, we'll escort you to your ship.

Pericles: Thank you.

(They all leave.)

Act 3, Scene 4. *Ephesus. Curtain up finds Thaisa sitting on the edge of a bed or cot. Cerimon is sitting in a chair.*

Cerimon: We found certain items in the coffin—some jewels—which, of course, are yours to keep—and this letter. Do you recognize the handwriting?

(Thaisa looks at the letter.)

Thaisa: It's my lord's handwriting.

Cerimon: Can you remember what happened?

Thaisa: We were at sea. There was a storm. I had just given birth. After that I don't know what happened. I don't know about my baby or my husband.—I think perhaps—perhaps the ship sank.—Maybe there's no one else left alive.

Cerimon: Well—we can't know for sure.

Thaisa: I think it's best if I went someplace and just lived a secluded life. I don't want to marry again.

Cerimon: There's a sanctuary where you can live. It's very peaceful there. My niece can stay with you and attend to you.

Thaisa: Thank you—although my thanks are hardly enough reward for all you've done.

Cerimon: Seeing you well is my reward, madam. You'll be all right. You'll like the sanctuary. It's a spiritual place.

Thaisa: That's what I need.—To devote myself to spiritual things.

(Scene ends without an exit.)

Act 4, Prologue. *Gower comes in, dressed differently again.*

Gower: Pretty good story, eh? I hope you're following this. Pericles is in Tyre, and Thaisa is in Ephesus, and they both think the other is dead. Now we're going to fast-forward fourteen years. Marina, the baby who was left in the care of Cleon and Dionyza in Tharsus, has grown into a beautiful and talented girl. She's admired by everyone—even more than her companion, Philoten, who is the daughter of Cleon and Dionyza. And that's the problem. Dionyza can't stand the fact that Marina gets so much attention while Philoten is ignored. So she has decided to get rid of Marina. She's going to have her murdered—by her servant Leonine. As for Lychorida, the nurse, she has conveniently died, so Marina has no one to protect her. Wait till you see what happens next!

(Gower leaves.)

Act 4, Scene 1. *The beach at Tharsus. Dionyza comes in with Leonine.*

Dionyza: You promised you'd do it. And I'm paying you for this. One quick blow and it's done. What's the problem?

Leonine: Well—I mean—okay, but I really hate to do it. She's such a lovely girl.

Dionyza: She's too lovely for her own good. Now don't get soft on me. You're my servant. Are you going to do this or not?

Leonine: Yes, madam.

Dionyza: Good.—Here she comes now.—She's still sad over her nurse's death.

(Marina comes in, looking sad. She is a bit disheveled.)

Dionyza: There you are, Marina. You mustn't grieve like that. You should take a nice walk on the beach with Leonine. It'll make you feel better.

Leonine: Yes. A little walk. That's what you need.

Marina: I don't really feel like it.

Dionyza: Oh, come on. You need to snap out of it. Suppose your father were to come back right now and find you in such a state? He'd blame me.

Marina: When is he coming?

Dionyza: He could come at any time now that you're fourteen. Come, now. Take a walk with Leonine.

Marina: I will if you insist.

Dionyza: That's a good girl.—Leonine, remember.—You know.

Leonine: Yes, madam.

Dionyza: All right, then.—I'll see you both later.

(Dionyza leaves.)

Marina: I don't really want to walk on the beach.

Leonine: Why not?

Marina: It makes me think of when I was born at sea in a storm.

Leonine: But you can't remember that.

Marina: Nurse told me. She told me how my father gave orders to the men so they wouldn't panic. He told them what to do with the ropes and sails. Nurse said it was the most terrible storm ever. But he saved the ship.—My mother died, of course. She died when I was born.

Leonine: You must say your prayers now.

Marina: Say my prayers? Why?

Leonine: I'll give you a minute, but that's all.

(A pause for effect.)

Marina: What?—Leonine, are you going to—kill me?

Leonine: I have to obey the Queen.

Marina: Why does she want me dead? What have I ever done to her?

Leonine: It's not for me to explain. I just have to do what I'm told.

Marina: Leonine! You can't be serious! You're not a murderer! I can't believe you could do such a thing! You mustn't!

(Leonine grabs her.)

Leonine: I have no choice! I'm sorry!

(Suddenly three Pirates rush in.)

1st Pirate: You're ours now!

(Leonine pushes Marina into the arms of the Pirates and runs out.)

2nd Pirate: Should we chase him?

3rd Pirate: Don't bother. This one's the prize. We'll get a lot of money for her. Let's get her on the ship and get out of here.

(The Pirates drag Marina out. After a brief interval, Leonine returns.)

Leonine: Well, that was damned convenient!—Pirates!—Okay, this works for me. She's gone for good. I'll tell the Queen I killed her and threw her into the sea. Problem solved!

(Leonine leaves.)

Act 4, Scene 2. *A brothel in Mytilene. Curtain up finds the Madam and her husband, the Pander, sitting and looking glum.*

Madam: We're losing business. Mytilene is full of horny men right now, and we've only got three girls.

Pander: And they're worn out.

Madam: Don't you think I know? They're complaining. A woman's got her limits. Never mind the money.

Pander: I sent Boulton to the market to search around and see if he could recruit a girl for us.

Madam: He'll have to get lucky. The other houses are looking for girls, too. It's a competitive business.

Pander: I told him if he didn't find someone I'd fire him.

Madam: Why aren't you out there yourself?

Pander: Me? I'm management.

Madam (Sarcastically): Ohhh.—Management.

(Boulton comes in with the Pirates and Marina.)

Boulton: Boss! Look what I brought you!

1st Pirate: This girl's for sale.

Madam: Well! She is a pretty one. Is she a virgin?

Marina: Of course, I'm a virgin!

Boulton: Isn't she a beauty? And she ain't low-class either. Look at those clothes.

Pander: Yeah. She obviously didn't come from no slum. *(To the Pirates)* Where'd you get her?

1st Pirate: Never mind. You don't need to know. We just want to sell her.

Madam: How much?

1st Pirate: A thousand farthings.

Boulton: It's a good deal, boss. Go for it.

Pander: Yeah. *(To the Pirates.)* I think we can do that. Come into the office.

(The Pander and the Pirates go out.)

Marina: What is this place?

Madam: Don't you know?

Boulton: She's a virgin. She'll make us a ton of money.

Madam: Aye, with the first customer. After that, she has to learn.

Marina: This is a brothel!

Madam: Yes, my dear. And you're going to learn how to use what nature gave you.

Marina: I'd rather die!

Madam: Now, don't be melodramatic. You'll get to like it. And you'll make friends with the other girls.

Marina: I'll drown myself! I'll take poison! I'll—

Madam: Don't talk foolishness. This is a profession like any other. We all live by selling something.—Boult, go out and circulate in the market and let the sailors and countrymen know we have a fine young girl they've never seen before. The prettiest in the whole city.

Boult: I'll do that.

(Boult leaves.)

Madam: Now you come with me, dearie. I have to give you a quick indoctrination.

(The Madam takes Marina out.)

Act 4, Scene 3. *Tharsus. The palace. Curtain up finds Cleon and Dionyza.*

Dionyza: Stop moaning about it. It's done with.

Cleon: But to kill such a nice girl! I never would have approved. What will we say to Pericles when he returns to take her home?

Dionyza: She died of natural causes. No one can say otherwise. Leonine has left Tharsus.

Cleon: The gods don't like this at all.

Dionyza: Never mind the gods. Think of our own daughter. Her future was in jeopardy as long as she lived in Marina's shadow. The girl had to be gotten rid of.

Cleon: Heavens forgive us!

Dionyza: When Pericles arrives, we'll take him to the monument, and he'll read the inscription with all the praises about how wonderful she was. *(Sarcastically)* How everyone loved her.

Cleon: I never realized you could be so wicked. You should be ashamed.

Dionyza: No, I'm not. And you just play your part and do what I tell you. And forget about—the heavens!

(Dionyza goes out.)

Act 4, Scene 4. *Gower comes in with a sprightly step, smiling. He's dressed differently again.*

Gower: Okay. We managed to find some pirates for you after all. You're getting your money's worth. Now, then, we're going to fast-forward just a bit and move the story along. Pericles and Helicanus both came to Tharsus and were taken to Marina's fake tomb. Very sad. And they were completely taken in by Dionyza's explanation. And then they left. And now we take you back to Mytilene and the brothel.

(Gower leaves.)

Act 4, Scene 5. *This scene is deleted.*

Act 4, Scene 6. *The brothel in Mytilene. The Pander, the Madam and Boulton come in.*

Pander: That girl is ruining us! She's preaching to the customers, telling them how wrong it is to patronize prostitutes! And they're listening to her!

Madam: They won't come back. They told me straight out.

Pander: She's a nut case.

Madam: The biggest. She prays like a nun. It's unnatural.

Pander: Either we get her laid or we have to get rid of her.

Boulton: Let me have her for one hour. I'll straighten her out.

Pander: Yeah, you want to rape her.

Boulton: No, no. It's not rape. It's behaviour modification.

Madam: That's rape.

Boulton: Well, either way, I'd be glad to do it.

(The Madam looks out a window and sees someone coming.)

Madam: Wait. I have a better idea. We have to give her to a high-class customer. Somebody with finesse. Somebody with experience. And I know just the person.

Pander: Who's coming?

Madam: The Governor. In his disguise, of course—ha! He doesn't want people to recognize him. Let's let him deflower that virgin.

Pander: Good idea!

(Lysimachus, Governor of Mytilene, comes in.)

Lysimachus: Hello, my friends!

Madam: Hello, your Honour!

Pander: Nice to see you again, sir!

Lysimachus: I've heard you have a new girl—a virgin.

Madam: We do, indeed. In fact, we've been saving her for you. And I guarantee she's not like anyone else you ever met here.

Boult (Ironically): That's for sure.

Lysimachus: Ah! Well, then, I want to meet her!

Pander (To Boult): Go get her.

(Boult goes out.)

Madam: You're going to like her a lot.

Pander: She doesn't have any experience. She needs, em, you know, a man of the world like yourself to, uh—

Madam: To use finesse with her.

Lysimachus: I understand perfectly.

(Boult returns with Marina.)

Madam: Well? What do you think? Ain't she a beauty?

Lysimachus: She's a man's comfort, that's for sure. *(He takes out his purse and gives some money to the Madam.)* Here.

Madam: Thank you, sir. Let me just have a quick word with her.

(The Madam takes Marina aside.)

Madam: Now listen, this man is a gentleman and a good friend of the establishment.

Marina: What sort of gentleman would be a friend of this establishment?

Madam: Now don't be contrary. This man is the Governor of Mytilene. He's got power and influence—and money. If you're nice to him, he'll be your friend. And you couldn't find a better friend in all of Mytilene.

Marina: I'll be nice to him if he shows that he really is my friend.

Madam (To Lysimachus): She's nervous and inexperienced, your Honour. You'll have to make allowances.

Lysimachus: That's quite all right. I understand.

Madam: Then I'll leave you to it.

(The Madam, the Pander, and Boult leave.)

Lysimachus: What's your name, girl?

Marina: Marina.

Lysimachus: That's a pretty name.

Marina: I was named Marina because I was born on a ship at sea.

Lysimachus: How interesting. And how did you get into this, em, trade?

Marina: Trade, sir? What trade do you mean?

Lysimachus: Come, now, you know what I mean.

Marina: No, I don't.

Lysimachus: Oh, come on. You don't need to be coy. This is a brothel.

Marina: Then why are you here? I'm told that you're a gentleman—the Governor of Mytilene, in fact.

Lysimachus: Ah. Your mistress told you, did she?

Marina: My mistress? I didn't know I had a mistress.

Lysimachus: The lady who runs this establishment.

Marina: She's no lady. I know what a lady is.—And I know what a gentleman is, too. If you're a gentleman, you have to prove it to me.

(Lysimachus pauses. He is surprised at Marina, but also intrigued.)

Lysimachus: What sort of girl are you?

Marina: Not the sort who belongs in a place like this, sir. I was brought here against my will, and I want nothing to do with this place. I'd rather be a fly and fly out of here than be a human being and be stuck here as a slave.

(Another pause for effect.)

Lysimachus: You're not like the other girls here. I can see that. You don't belong here. You obviously come from a better class of people.

Marina: The best class, sir.

(Lysimachus takes some gold from his purse.)

Lysimachus: I want to help you. Take this. And please forget what I came here for.

Marina: Thank you, sir.

Lysimachus: I like you. You have character. Just be true to yourself and have courage, and things will turn out all right for you.

Marina: The gods preserve you, sir.

(Boult comes in, noticing Lysimachus holding his purse.)

Boult: Oh! Do I get a tip, sir?

Lysimachus: A tip? I'll give you a clout on the head, you miscreant! Nobody mistreats this girl, understand?

(Lysimachus goes out, angry.)

Boult: What the—? *(To Marina)* I can see we're going to have problems with you. We'll just have to do something about that.

(The Madam comes in.)

Madam: Where's Lysimachus?

Boult: Gone. She said something to him and he left.

Madam: What!

Boult: She bad-mouthed us, and now he hates us.

Madam: Damn it!—Boult, you take her and do whatever you want with her. I should've known better than to buy a virgin.

Marina (Looking up): You gods are witnesses.

Madam: You damned virgin! You freak!—Boult, you deal with her.

(The Madam goes out.)

Boult (Smiling): You heard her.

Madam: You low-life! You take orders from people like that? Any dog is better off than you!

Boult: I just work here.

Marina: You call this work? This is the lowest job on the face of the earth.

Boult: I get paid.

Marina: I'll pay you to take me out of here and place me with a respectable family.

Boult: What're you talking about?

Marina: The Governor's my friend now. He gave me money, and I want to buy my way out of here. If I stay, I'll chase all your customers away and you'll all be ruined. If you let me leave, I'll reimburse whatever the madam paid for me, plus something extra for her trouble. And I'll pay you to place me with a respectable family.

Boult: As what—a laundress?

Marina: I'm a very educated girl, and very skilled. I can tutor children.

Boult: Are you on the level?

Marina: Absolutely.

Boult: Well—it's not up to me. It's up to the management.

Marina: Then let's talk to them.

Boult: Well—okay. I think they might go along with it. Come on.

(They go out.)

Act 5, Prologue. *Gower comes out, dressed differently.*

Gower: Hey, you gotta love that girl! Of course, in those days a fourteen-year-old was much more mature than she'd be today. Hell, she'd be ready for marriage. Juliet was thirteen when she married Romeo. And Margaret of Anjou was fifteen when she married Henry the Sixth.—Anyway, here's what's happened. Marina was able to leave the brothel, and she was taken in by a good family as a sort of nanny or tutor. Today is a feast day in Mytilene, and the city is buzzing. Everyone's got the day off, and Marina and her kiddies are spending the day at the beach. And guess whose ship is arriving in Mytilene. Pericles's ship. And Governor Lysimachus has come to the harbour to welcome it. He doesn't know whose ship it is. He's just being friendly to visitors. The ship is anchored just off shore, and the Governor has gone out on his barge to meet it. In a moment you'll be on the ship.

(Gower goes out.)

Act 5, Scene 1. *On board Pericles's ship. Pericles is apparently asleep on a pile of blankets or canvas on one side of the stage. He is unshaven and unkempt. (From this point on, we will see him with long hair and a long beard.) He is screened off by a sheet or curtain that divides the stage edgewise to the audience. Voices are heard from the opposite side as the Governor's party is being received. Helicanus, hearing the voices, comes in on Pericles's side and passes across the stage. He meets two Sailors coming in—one of his own and one from Mytilene.*

Tyrian Sailor (To the Mytilenian Sailor): You can talk to Master Helicanus.—Oh, here he is. *(To Helicanus)* My lord, a party from Mytilene. Governor Lysimachus and some of his people.

Helicanus: Fine. Invite them up.

Tyrian Sailor (To the party offstage): This way, gentlemen.

(Lysimachus comes in, attended by two Lords.)

Mytilenian Sailor (To Lysimachus): This is the captain, sir.

Lysimachus: Greetings, Captain! The gods preserve you! I am Lysimachus, Governor of Mytilene.

Helicanus: Welcome, sir. I am Helicanus—acting commander. The King is, em—*(Very softly, finger on lips)*—resting. I must speak softly.

Lysimachus: Oh, I see. Where are you from?

Helicanus: We're from Tyre. The King is somewhat indisposed.

Lysimachus: I'm sorry to hear that. Is he ill?

Helicanus: He's emotionally depressed. He's been through a rough time. He lost his wife and daughter.

Lysimachus: That's terrible. Could I talk to him?

Helicanus: You can try, but he won't speak to anyone. He's in a bad state.

Lysimachus: Oh, dear. Well, let me at least say hello.

Helicanus: If you wish.

(Helicanus draws back the curtain.)

Lysimachus: Your Majesty, the gods preserve you!—Em, we are your friends, sir.—Anything we can do—

(No reaction from Pericles.)

Helicanus (Shrugging): I told you.

Lord: I know who could cheer him up. *(To Lysimachus.)* That nice girl you helped. You know, the nanny.

Lysimachus: Ah, yes! *(To Helicanus)* She's the most wonderful girl. She's better than any medicine.

Lord: She's right on the beach. We can bring her aboard in a minute.

Lysimachus: Good idea. Go get her.

(The Lord leaves.)

Helicanus: If you think it'll do any good—

Lysimachus: It's worth a try. I know this girl. She's very sweet and very intelligent. Wait till you meet her.

Helicanus: Okay, great.—Em, the reason we stopped here at Mytilene. We need provisions. We have plenty of money.

Lysimachus: No problem. We've got everything you need.—Em, I'm very curious to know just what happened to your King.

Helicanus: It's a long story. Very sad. He was in a storm with his pregnant wife—Oh, I think your little friend is here.

(The Lord returns with Marina and another Girl as a companion.)

Lysimachus: Ah, there you are!—Oops, we have to speak softly. *(To Helicanus)* This is the girl.

Helicanus: What a beautiful girl!

Lysimachus: Tell you the truth, if I knew more about her parentage, I think I'd marry her myself. *(To Marina)* These are our friends, my dear. Their King is deeply depressed. He won't speak to anyone. I thought if anyone could snap him out of it, you could.

Marina: I'm willing to try.

Helicanus: He's over here (*Indicating Pericles*).

Marina: Leave us a moment, sir.

(Marina takes her companion by the hand and goes to Pericles, drawing the curtain behind them. The others move away to give them more privacy. Marina and her companion confer in whispers. Then Marina begins to sing something sweet and soothing. [Director's choice.] Pericles waves her away without looking at her, and she stops singing. Marina and her companion confer again in whispers.)

Marina: My lord, I, too, have suffered terrible grief. I come from a noble family like yours, but the fates tore me away from them. I went through terrible things.

(She pauses, discouraged by a lack of reaction. Then, belatedly, Pericles sits up and looks at her.)

Pericles: What did you say? A noble family like mine? Is that what you said?

Marina: Yes, my lord. If you knew, you'd understand that my sorrow is no less than yours.

(Pericles regards her with curiosity.)

Pericles: There's something about you.—Are you from this city?

Marina: Not from any city, my lord.

Pericles: Strange.—You remind me of my wife.—My daughter would have looked like you.—Tell me about yourself. Where were you raised?

Marina: My lord, if I told you the truth, you probably wouldn't believe me.

Pericles: No, no, I'll believe you. You have an honest face. I want to know all about you. What's your name?

Marina: Marina.

(Pericles reacts with shock.)

Marina: Is something wrong, sir?

Pericles: No, I—I was just—surprised.

Marina: My father named me. He was a king.

Pericles: A king!

Marina: I knew you wouldn't believe me.

Pericles: No, no, I believe you. It's just that—well, it's just so strange.—Tell me where you were born.

Marina: I was born on a ship at sea. That's why I was named Marina.

(Pericles stands up, amazed.)

Pericles: Good God!—And who was your mother?

Marina: She was the daughter of a king. She died giving birth to me. My nurse told me all about it.

Pericles: Oh!—Oh!—This can't be!

Marina: You disbelieve me, sir.

Pericles: No, no!—Just tell me—how did you come to be here?

Marina: My father left me in Tharsus, in the care of Cleon and Dionyza. When I was fourteen they tried to have me murdered. But I was stolen away by pirates and brought here to Mytilene.

(Pericles is crying.)

Marina: It's all true, sir. My father was King Pericles of Tyre.

Pericles: Helicanus!

(Helicanus and Lysimachus come quickly.)

Helicanus: My lord?

(Pericles puts his arms around Marina.)

Pericles: Do you know who this girl is?

Helicanus: I don't know, my lord. Only that the Governor thinks the world of her.

Lysimachus: I do, sir. I adore this girl. But she would never tell me who her parents were.

Pericles: Helicanus, am I dreaming? Tell me if I'm dreaming!

Helicanus: No, sir. You're wide awake.

Pericles (To Marina): Tell this man who your mother was.

Marina (To Helicanus): Her name was Thaisa. She was the daughter of King Simonides of Pentapolis.

Pericles: This is Marina! This is my daughter!

Helicanus: But we saw her tomb! She died in Tharsus!

Pericles: We were tricked! Cleon and Dionyza wanted us to think she was dead!

Marina: Sir?—Am I—your daughter?

Pericles: I am Pericles!

(Marina bursts into tears. They embrace.)

Pericles: She lives! My daughter lives!

Lysimachus (To Helicanus): She's his daughter?

Helicanus: Yes! *(To Pericles)* My lord, this is Governor Lysimachus.

Marina: He's my friend, father. He was kind to me. He saved me from—from a very bad place.

(Pericles embraces Lysimachus.)

Pericles: The gods preserve you, sir! The gods bless you a million times over!—*(Becomes distracted)*—Oh—oh—I'm a mess.—Look at me.—I must look like a beggar.

(Ethereal music is heard.)

Pericles: Helicanus—do you hear that?

Helicanus: Hear what, my lord?

Pericles: That music. Can't you hear it?

Helicanus: I don't hear anything.

Lysimachus (Aside to Helicanus): He's a little faint. He should lie down.

Pericles: What heavenly music!

Helicanus: Yes, yes, my lord. You're all right. Come. Lie you down and rest. Don't worry about a thing. We'll be nearby.

Pericles: Yes.—I should lie down.—I feel a bit woozy.

(Pericles lies down. Helicanus gestures to the others, and they all go out, leaving Pericles alone. Then the goddess Diana appears as a vision to Pericles.)

Diana: Pericles.—You know me. I am Diana. My temple stands in Ephesus. You must go there and make sacrifice upon my altar. And you must tell the priestess all these things that have happened to you. You must do this, Pericles, if you want complete happiness.

(Diana disappears.)

Pericles (Awakening): Diana!—Diana!—I'll do it! I'll go!—Helicanus!

(Helicanus, Lysimachus, and Marina return.)

Helicanus: My lord, are you all right?

(Pericles stands up and is very composed.)

Pericles: I'm fine, Helicanus. I was going to go to Tharsus and pay a visit to Cleon and Dionyza. But first, we're going to Ephesus.

Helicanus: Ephesus?

Pericles: Yes. I'll explain later.—My lord Governor, we'll need provisions.

Lysimachus: You can have whatever you need, my lord.—Oh, and, uh—I have something to ask of you.

Pericles: Whatever it is, the answer is yes. *(He sees the way Lysimachus looks at Marina.)* Ah. Something to do with my daughter.

Lysimachus: Yes.

Pericles: I think you like her.

Lysimachus: More than that, sir.

Pericles: I can read your mind. You want to marry her.

Lysimachus: Em—yes, actually.

Pericles: You've been kind to her already, so I know you'll be a good husband to her. Yes, you can marry her. In Ephesus.

Lysimachus: Thank you, my lord! Come. Let me escort you.

(Lysimachus links arms with Pericles and they all leave.)

Act 5, Scene 2. *Gower comes in, dressed differently.*

Gower: Hello, hello, hello! How are you liking it? *(Pretends to hear a comment from the audience.)* Oh, you've guessed everything so far, have you? Well, good for you. Let's see if you can guess what happens in the last scene. We're going straight to Ephesus, to the temple of Diana. Do you remember whom we left in Ephesus?—Yes, you remember. Well, don't leave your seats, because you don't want to miss the perfect ending to this utterly bizarre story.—And now, by teleportation, we take you to—Ephesus!

(Gower leaves.)

Act 5, Scene 3. *The temple of Diana at Ephesus. Curtain up finds Thaisa as the priestess, standing by the altar with Attendants. She is elaborately costumed and made up. Also present are Cerimon and other Ephesians. Pericles comes in with Lysimachus, Helicanus, and Marina.*

Pericles: Honour and reverence to the goddess Diana! I was bid in a vision to come and tell you the things that have happened to me.

Thaisa: Welcome, stranger. Will you make a sacrifice first?

Pericles: Yes. Gladly.

(Pericles cuts off some of his hair and burns it on a tray with a candle.)

Pericles: I am a king. I was forced to leave my country for my own safety. I was shipwrecked at Pentapolis and there I married the daughter of the king. *(Thaisa reacts to this.)* At sea in a storm, she gave birth, but she died. Our daughter, Marina, I left at Tharsus to be raised by Cleon and Dionyza. But they betrayed my trust and tried to murder her. The fates intervened and brought her to Mytilene. I didn't know she was alive. But when my ship arrived in Mytilene, I met her. She knew who I was.

(Thaisa is wide-eyed and trembling.)

Thaisa: Can it be?—Can it be?

Pericles: Madam?

Thaisa: Are you who I think you are?

Pericles: I am Pericles, King of Tyre.

Thaisa: Pericles!

(She faints.)

Pericles: She's fainted! Someone help!

(Cerimon and another Ephesian rush forward to help Thaisa.)

Cerimon: My lord, are you really Pericles?

Pericles: Yes.

Cerimon: My lord—this is your wife! This is Thaisa!

Pericles: But, sir—that's impossible. My wife died in childbirth at sea. She was sealed into a coffin and thrown overboard.

Cerimon: Off this coast, right? Ephesus.

Pericles: Why, yes.

Cerimon: We found the coffin, and she was still alive. I revived her myself.

Pericles: What!

Cerimon: You left a letter in the coffin, didn't you?

Pericles: Yes, I did!

Cerimon: And jewels.—Here. These are the jewels. *(Cerimon picks up the jewels from the altar.)* Do you recognize them?

(Pericles looks at the jewels.)

Pericles: Helicanus! These are the jewels!

Marina: Father! What does this mean?

(Thaisa has recovered and is now standing.)

Thaisa: My father gave you a ring when we were married. Show it to me.

(Pericles shows her the ring.)

Thaisa: This is it!

Pericles: Thaisa!

(They embrace, weeping.)

Marina: Mother! Mother!

Pericles: This is Marina!

Thaisa: Daughter!

(Marina and Thaisa embrace.)

Helicanus: Bless you, madam! My noble queen!—Oh! Thank the gods! Thank you! Thank you!

Pericles (To Thaisa): Do you remember who I said I left in Tyre to run the city while I was gone?

Thaisa: It was—Helicanus.

Helicanus: I am Helicanus. Your loyal servant, madam!

Thaisa (To Pericles): This is the man who saved my life.—Cerimon.

Pericles: I am forever in your debt, sir!

Cerimon: There is no debt, my lord. This moment of happiness is the greatest reward I've ever had in my life.

Pericles: Thaisa, this is Lysimachus, Governor of Mytilene. It was thanks to him that I was reunited with Marina. They want to be married.

Thaisa: We'll do it here today.

Helicanus (To Pericles): But not until you get rid of all that hair, my lord.

Pericles: Yes, yes—ha, ha! Now I can get rid of it!

Cerimon: And afterwards we'll celebrate at my house. I insist.

Pericles: We'll do that! *(He faces the altar.)* Thank you, Diana! Thank you, all the gods! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! *(He turns to the audience.)* And thank you, my friends, for sticking with us through all our miseries and sharing this joy with us. And may you all find courage in the face of adversity and be blessed every day as long as you live.—Come, everyone.

(Everyone goes out, and Gower comes in immediately.)

Gower: Wasn't that a great ending? Perfect! All the lost people found each other again after all that trouble.—Now, as for Cleon and Dionyza, you want to know what happened to them. They got what they deserved. Cleon—the pussy-whipped wimp!—got crushed to death when a building collapsed and a slab of granite the size of a car fell on him. Squashed him like a bug—ha!—And as for Dionyza—the bitch!—Remember what happened to Antiochus and his daughter? The fire that came down from heaven and burned them to a crisp? Same thing. Dionyza was burned to ashes in a matter of seconds—ha, ha!—Unfortunately, these things only happen in Shakespeare. *(He gives the audience a two-fingered salute.)* Take 'er easy!

(Gower goes out.)

END

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